

**PREFACE**  
Big Book Pages xi-xii

- 1) What has this book become and why has it not changed? Pxi L7
- 2) What has been added or altered from the first edition? Pxi L18
- 3) Why was the history section changed? Pxi L9 (*What hasn't changed?*)
- 4) What is the purpose of the personal stories? Pxi L13

## **FORWARD TO THE FIRST EDITION**

Big Book Pages xiii-xiv

*This is the Forward as it appeared in the first printing of the first edition in 1939*

- 1) Is this book one man's opinion? Pxiii L1
- 2) What is the main purpose of this book? Pxiii L4
- 3) Why did the first 100 remain anonymous? Pxiii L13
- 4) Is A.A. a conventional organization? Pxiii L27

## **FORWARD TO THE SECOND EDITION**

Big Book Pages xv-xviii

*Figures given in this forward describe the Fellowship as it was in 1955*

- 1) What has happened since the original Forward to this book was written in 1939? P xv L1
- 2) Where can A.A. Groups be found? P xv L13
- 3) Where and when was the A.A. spark struck? P xv L23
- 4) What relieved the broker's drink obsession? P xv L26
- 5) Who is Dr. William D. Silkworth and what did Bill W. learn from him? P xvi L3
- 6) What did Bill W. learn from the Oxford Group? P xvi L11
- 7) Why did Bill W. meet with the Akron physician? P xvi L15
- 8) How did Bill W. change the Akron Physician's life? P xvi L25
- 9) What did they learn from their meeting? P xvi L32
- 10) How did Bill W. and the Akron Physician react to their first meeting? P xvii L4
- 11) What was A.A. like in 1937? P xvii L14
- 12) When and Why was the Big Book written? P xvii L23
- 13) Where did Alcoholics Anonymous get its name? P xvi L28
- 14) How did our Fellowship learn the importance of AA Unity? P xviii L28

## **FORWARD TO THE SECOND EDITION (cont.)**

Big Book Pages xvix-xxi

*Figures given in this forward describe the Fellowship as it was in 1955*

- 15) What are the Principles by which A.A. groups and A.A. as a whole can survive and live? How do they relate to the Steps? P xix L8

- 16) When, Where, How & Why were the A.A. Traditions formally adopted?  
Pxix L25
- 17) How does the recovery rate in A.A.'s adolescent period compare with today? Explain. Pxx L5
- 18) Is A.A. a Religious Organization or a Medical Organization? Pxx L20
- 19) What class or category of person does alcohol respect and which class or category comprises A.A.? Pxx L24
- 20) Is A.A. the ONLY therapy for Alcoholics? Explain. Pxxi L5

## **FORWARD TO THE THIRD EDITION**

Big Book Page xxii

- 1) How had the A.A. Fellowship grown and changed since the last edition?  
Pxxii L1
- 2) What does the growth and change to the Fellowship confirm about the basic principles of the A.A. Program? Pxxii L13

## **THE DOCTOR'S OPINION**

### Steps 1 & 2 Big Book Pages xxiii–xxvii

*Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

- 1) Why did AA ask Doctor Silkworth to write the Doctor's Opinion? Pxxii  
L1
- 2) What did the Doctor confirm that alcoholics had suspected? Why was this important? Pxxiv L3
- 3) What is suggested prior to working on a spiritual plane? Pxxiv L28
- 4) What did he suggest that alcohol did to the alcoholic that did not happen to the temperate drinker? Pxxvi L4
- 5) What must happen if we are to recreate our lives? Pxxvi L14
- 6) How does the good doctor describe an alcoholic and why they drink?  
Pxxvi L30
- 7) What happens after they have succumbed to the desire to drink? Pxxvii L3
- 8) Why is a psychic change essential and how is it produced? Pxxvii L7–24
- 9) How does the phenomenon of craving effect mental control? Pxxvii L24

**THE DOCTOR'S OPINION (cont.)**  
Steps 1 & 2    Big Book Pages xxviii–xxx

*Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

- 10) What are the five classifications of alcoholics described by Doctor Silkworth?    Pxviii L7
- 11) What do all classes of alcoholics have in common?    Pxxviii L24
- 12) What is the only relief from the alcoholic allergy?    Pxxviii L30
- 13) Where does the Doctor suggest we look for the solution? Why?    Pxxix L9 & Pxxx L1
- 14) Does the Doctor offer any other advice?    Pxxx L5

## **BILL'S STORY**

### Steps 1 & 2 Big Book Pages 1-4

*Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

- 1) When and why did Bill discover liquor? P1 L5-7
- 2) Why did Bill again turn to alcohol? P1 L10
- 3) When and how did Bill's drinking again cause him problems? P2 L7-10
- 4) How did Bill rationalize his behavior to his wife? P2 L11-15
- 5) How was Bill's life successful? P3 L13-17
- 6) What part did drinking play? P3 L17-18
- 7) How did his drinking patterns differ from earlier times? P2 L10 vs P3 L22-23
- 8) How did this affect his friendships? P3 L23-25
- 9) How was his home life affected? P3 L25-26
- 10) What did Bill begin to notice that he felt in the morning? P3 L33
- 11) What was Bill's solution to the stock market crash? P4 L16
- 12) What did he begin to feel as he drank? P4 L19
- 13) What were the consequences of his drinking? P4 L25-27; L28-32

## **BILL'S STORY** (cont.)

### Steps 1 & 2 Big Book Pages 5-6

*Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to*



*sanity.*

- 14) What had liquor become to Bill? P5 L3
- 15) What were mornings like for Bill? P5 L7-11
- 16) What illusion was Bill under? P5 L11-12
- 17) What were the consequences of Bill's drinking in the midst of a promising business opportunity? P5 L17-21
- 18) What did Bill realize? P5 L22-23
- 19) Where did Bill first try to stop drinking on will power? P5 L22-26
- 20) Despite Bill's high resolve, what happened? P5 L27-31
- 21) After the next unexpected bout of drinking, how did Bill feel? P6 L8-13
- 22) What did Bill think about doing? P6 L18-19
- 23) How did Bill finance his morning drinking P6 L24-25
- 24) Did Bill think about suicide? P6 L29-32

**BILL'S STORY** (cont.)  
Steps 1 & 2    Big Book Pages 7-12

*Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

- 25) What concerning Bill and those closest to him?    P7 L13
- 26) What did Bill learn in the hospital?    P7 L13
- 27) Was self-knowledge the answer?    P7 L21-24
- 28) When Bill returned to the hospital, what was his wife informed of?    P7  
L27-31
- 29) Where did Bill take Step 1?    P8 L8-12
- 30) After Bill reached his bottom, what was the outcome?    P8 L19-24
- 31) How did Bill describe his friends appearance?    P9 L11-13
- 32) What did he relate to Bill?    P9 L27-32
- 33) How did Bill react and why?    P10 L1-2
- 34) Was Bill an atheist?    P10 L16-18
- 35) What did Bill's friend tell him?    P11 L14-16
- 36) What did Bill realize and what step had he taken?    P12 L19-23

**BILL'S STORY (cont.)**  
Steps 1 & 2    Big Book Pages 13-16

*Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

37) Where did Bill take steps 3-11?    P13 L6-28

38) What was Bill promised as a result of these steps?    P13 L29 thru P14 L2.

39) Where did Bill get the idea of A.A. and what did his friend emphasize to Bill about recovery?    P14 L23-33 thru P15 L1-5

40) What kept Bill from drinking?    P15 L15-20

41) How long does faith have to work?    P16 L12-13

**THERE IS A SOLUTION**  
Step 2 Big Book Pages 17-27

*Step 2: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

- 1) What are the two common bonds that recovering alcoholics have that transcend political, economic, social or religious backgrounds? P17 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraphs
- 2) What can a recovered alcoholic do for an alcoholic that those who do not have the problem can't do? P18 L20
- 3) All we have to do is "don't drink and go to meetings" - Right? P19 L3
- 4) When one asks, "What do I have to do?" What is the answer given by the book? P20 L4-14
- 5) Moderate drinker, heavy drinker and a real alcoholic. What is the difference? P20 L29 thru P21 L12
- 6) "The main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than the body." What is the MIND? P23 L3
- 7) Can you identify with the top of page 24 as the "invisible line" you crossed over?
- 8) What is the *fact*? P24 L6
- 9) What is the *solution*? P25 L4-24
- 10) Surely, there is a "middle of the road solution"? P25 L25
- 11) What is the answer to alcoholism as given to us by Dr. Carl Jung? P27 L12

**THERE IS A SOLUTION (cont.)**  
Step 2 Big Book Pages 28-29

*Step 2: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

- 12) Is there more than one way to discover God? P28 L10
- 13) Clear-cut "suggestions" or clear-cut directions? P29 L3
- 14) What does the book say our stories should describe? P29 L6

**MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM**  
Steps 1 & 2    Big Book Pages 30-34

*Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

- 1) What is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker?    P30 L1-10
- 2) What is the first step in recovery?    P30 L11
- 3) Does an alcoholic ever recover control?    P30 L15-24
- 4) Based on your “own experience” without going into much detail, do you feel your drinking got progressively worse?    P30
- 5) Can you identify with the description of the alcoholic as it appears on page 31?
- 6) If one is not sure he or she is an alcoholic, what does the book suggest we do to find out?    P31 L30
- 7) Does the story on pages 32-33 convince you that you can not drink normally even after a long stretch of being sober?
- 8) Does the length of time or the quantity we drank have anything to do with becoming an alcoholic?    P33 L25
- 9) Assuming that one wishes to stop drinking, what determines whether we need spiritual help or not?    P34 L16
- 10) What is the baffling feature of alcoholism?    P34 L24

**MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM (cont.)**  
Steps 1 & 2    Big Book Pages 35-43

*Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to*

*sanity.*

- 11) Do you agree the "mental state that proceeds a relapse into drinking" to be the crux of the problem? P34 L27
- 12) Does the story of Jim on pages 35-37 give us a good illustration of the insane thinking that precedes a drink?
- 13) Does the story of the Jaywalker sound like anyone you know?
- 14) Do you agree that although we may have been intelligent in other matters "When it came to alcohol we have been strangely insane"? P38 L22
- 15) Does your self-knowledge have anything to do with your ability to quit drinking? P39 L7
- 16) At certain times, does the alcoholic have an effective mental defense against that first drink? P43 L26
- 17) Where does the defense come from? P43 L29

## **WE AGNOSTICS**

### Steps 1 & 2 Big Book Pages 44-49

*Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

- 1) If you can't quit entirely, and you've lost control over the amount you drink what are you? P44 L7
- 2) Is an atheist or an agnostic a rare thing in A.A.? P44 L23
- 3) What is the alcoholic's real dilemma? P45 L9
- 4) Where can we find the power that will solve our problem? P45 L11
- 5) According to the Big Book, when we speak of God, what do we mean? P47 L1
- 6) What happens to one who says, "I do believe or I am willing to believe that there is a Power greater than myself"? P47 L14
- 7) Do you see that the acquisition of faith can begin on very simply terms? P47 L30-31
- 8) What are the attitudes that are a handicap to obtaining a belief in a power greater than ourselves? P48 L1-2
- 9) What is another good argument for believing in a power greater than one's self? P48 L17 thru P49 L14
- 10) Why should we not even have prejudice against organized religion? P49 L21



**WE AGNOSTICS** (cont.)  
Steps 1 & 2    Big Book Pages 50-57

*Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*Step 2: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

- 11) What is the one proposition that most recovering alcoholics seem to agree on?    P50 L16-19
- 12) Even though the level of intelligence is about the same, why was ancient man so slow to make progress compared to the progress man has made in the last 50 years?    P51 L10-22
- 13) What is your answer to the question asked in the Big Book on P51 L23?
- 14) What made us change our mind about the God idea working and our ideas not working?    P51 L24
- 15) What do you say to this statement: “When we became alcoholics, crushed by a self imposed crises we could not postpone or evade, we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn’t. What was our choice to be?”    P53 L15-19 (N.B. This answer has to come from the heart, it isn’t in the book.)
- 16) Are we now confronted with the question of faith?    P53 L20
- 17) How have we been practicing faith without even knowing it?    P54
- 18) Where does the fundamental idea of God come from?    P55 L9-22
- 19) When does God disclose Himself to us?    P57 L14

## **HOW IT WORKS**

### Step 3 Big Book Pages 58-64

*Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*

- 1) Is your chance of success very good if you thoroughly follow the path? P58 L1
- 2) Who is apt to fail? P58 L2
- 3) If you decide you want it and are willing to go to any length to get it - i.e. what then? P58 L16
- 4) Is there an easier, softer way? P58 L19
- 5) What if I go at it half-heartedly? P59 L4
- 6) After we review the description of the alcoholic and the chapter to the agnostic, and we reflect on our relationship with alcohol what are the conclusions or pertinent ideas? P60 L16-20
- 7) If we are convinced of the pertinent ideas, what do we do then? P60 L21
- 8) Why is life run on self-will a failure? P60 L25 thru P61 L10
- 9) What is the root of our trouble? P62 L6
- 10) Who makes it possible for us to rid ourselves of selfishness? P62 L18
- 11) How does this work? P62 L26-33

## **HOW IT WORKS (cont.)**

### Step 3 Big Book Pages 63-64

*Step 3: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*

12) What happens when we take this vital step? P63 L1-12

13) Read the third step prayer so we can all see the simplicity of the step. P63  
L13-20

14) Should we take this step with someone or alone? Explain. P63 L23-31

## **HOW IT WORKS**

### Step 4 Big Book Pages 64-71

*Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

- 1) After we make our 3<sup>rd</sup> Step decision, what is “next”? P64 L1
- 2) Explain the comparison between a commercial inventory and a personal inventory? P64 L10
- 3) What, manifested in many ways, has defeated us? P64 L20
- 4) What is the number one offender? P64 L23
- 5) Where and how do we list resentments? P64 L29
- 6) What about fears? P68 L3
- 7) What about sex? P68 L28
- 8) How is the step summarized on P70 L23?
- 9) What about the last paragraph? - Do you see Steps 2, 3 & 4?

## **INTO ACTION**

### Step 5 Big Book Pages 72-75

*Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*

- 1) How is the personal inventory summarized in the first paragraph on P72?
- 2) What is the best reason for taking Step 5, according to the book? P72 L22
- 3) If we are to live long and happily in this world, what must we do? P73 L33
- 4) Once we decide who is to hear our story, what do we do? P75 L3
- 5) What are the results of this step? P75 L12
- 6) What do we do when we have completed Step 5? P 75 L22

## **INTO ACTION**

### Steps 6 & 7    Big Book Page 76

*Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*

*Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*

- 1) What is indispensable for doing Step 6?    P76 L2
- 2) Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things, which we have admitted are objectionable?    P76 L3
- 3) Can HE now take them all - every one?    P75 L5
- 4) If we still cling to some thing we will not let go, will we ask God to help us be willing?    P76 L6
- 5) How do we know when we have completed Step 7?    P76 L8

## INTO ACTION

### Step 8 & 9 Big Book Pages 76-83

*Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*

*Step 9: Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

- 1) What does the statement “*Faith without works is dead*” mean to you?
- 2) From where do we begin to get the list of people we have harmed? P76 L17
- 3) What should our attitude be as we approach Step 8? P76 L19-27
- 4) What is our real purpose at this time? P77 L3
- 5) Is it wise to declare, “*we have gone religious*” when approaching those whom we have harmed? Explain P77 L4
- 6) How do we make our approach? P77 L15
- 7) How often do we fail to make satisfactory progress? P78 L5-13
- 8) What about money owed? P78 L14
- 9) What about criminal offenses? P78 L26
- 10) What about domestic troubles? P80 L32
- 11) Why does the book say, “*We feel a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough*”? P82 L24

## **INTO ACTION** (cont.)

### Step 8 & 9 Big Book Pages 83-84

*Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*

*Step 9: Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

- 12) How do we take the lead in the long period of reconstruction that lies ahead?  
P83 L1
- 13) Is the spiritual life just a theory? Explain. P83 L13-18
- 14) What about certain wrongs that we can never fully right? P83 L19
- 15) Do we now act servile or crawl before anyone? P83 L25
- 16) What happens if we are painstaking about this phase of our development?  
P83 L29
- 17) What do we finally realize? P84 L19
- 18) Are the promises extravagant? P84 L12
- 19) What do we have to do to make them materialize? P84 L14



## **INTO ACTION**

### Step 10 Big Book Pages 84-85

*Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we wrong, promptly admitted it.*

- 1) When did we start what this step is asking us to continue?
- 2) What is the “*world of the Spirit*”?
- 3) Can you spot Steps 4 through 9 on Page 84 Lines 23-28
- 4) What is our code? P84 L29
- 5) What is the clue that recovery has taken place after reading Page 84 Lines 30-32?
- 6) What about the rest of the promises on the top of Page 85?
- 7) Are we cured? If not, why not? P85 L13
- 8) What is the proper use of the will now that we have it back? P85 L22
- 9) What have we followed if we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us? P85 L26

## **INTO ACTION**

### Step 11    Big Book Pages 85-88

*Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*

- 1) Why do you think prayer and meditation are important at this stage of recovery and what are the conditions for it working?    P85 L32
- 2) What is the spiritual thing to do when we retire at night?    P86 L5-18
- 3) What about when we awaken?    P86 L19-27
- 4) Do you know how to visualize your day as you meditate? Do you have a good example?    P86 L28
- 5) How do you conclude a period of meditation?    P87 L10
- 6) Is it okay to seek outside help in spiritual matters?    P87 L20
- 7) If we are in the realm of the spirit, how do we go through our day? P87 L31
- 8) If we alcoholics are undisciplined - who disciplines us?    P88 L9

## **WORKING WITH OTHERS**

### Step 12 Big Book Pages 89-103

*Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as THE result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all of our affairs.*

- 1) What is the value of one alcoholic working with another? P89 L1
- 2) What are the things we are told not to do in a typical first call as described on Page 90 to Page 96?
- 3) Is this information valuable to you and I in this chapter which might also be called “How to Make a 12 Step Call?”
- 4) Do you understand that those who have recovered can in fact give good “advice” to those who do not know? P96 L15
- 5) Does the information give on Page 97 Lines3-19 give us reason to understand that we must put sobriety as a top priority?
- 6) What is available today for friends and families of alcoholics?
- 7) What should we burn into the consciousness of everyone we work with that is new to sobriety? P98 L20
- 8) Are there legitimate conditions for not being able to get sober? P99 L30
- 9) What is the outcome of good 12 Step Work? P100 L5
- 10) Last paragraph of the chapter - your thoughts?

## **SOME DESCRIPTIONS OF WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE!!**

- Awakening
- Transformation
- Shift
- Alteration
- Change (Revolutionary!)
- Tap into unsuspected inner resource!
- “God-Consciousness”
- Re-arrange our thinking!
- Change beliefs
- Open the mind.
- See the new possibilities!

None of this is possible without effort and knowledge of HOW TO!

## **BIG BOOK HIGHLIGHTS**

June 10, 1935	Alcoholics Anonymous Founded
Fall, 1937	Decision to write book so message would not become garbled or twisted. (40 members)
1937	New York breaks with Oxford Groups
March, 1938	Big Book started with first two chapters written to be used in fund raising.
December 1938	Twelve Steps written
April 1939	Big Book published (100 members)
Summer, 1939	Midwest breaks with Oxford Groups
September 1939	“Alcoholics and God” appeared in Liberty Magazine
February 1940	Rockefeller gave dinner (800 members)
March, 1941	Saturday Evening Post article written (2000 members)
End of 1941	8000 members
1953	Twelve and Twelve published  Second Edition of Big Book published

- The angry people are those who are most afraid
- Whatever you are trying to avoid won't go away until you confront it
- If you don't start - it's certain you won't arrive
- When you blame others - you give up your power to change
- There is no right or wrong - only consequences
- There are no victims - only volunteers
- Worry comes from the belief that you are powerless
- The way to win is to make it OK to lose
- What you are afraid to do is a clear indicator of the next thing you need to do
- If you don't know what direction to take, you haven't acknowledged where you are

## BILL'S STORY

Bill's Story was written in 1937 and the story and the Chapter, "There Is A Solution" were mimeographed and used as part of the fund raising crusade that failed. In Bill's Story we see the basis for the Twelve Steps which were written for the book in December 1938, according to our History Books. If we look closely we can see the "seeds" for the 12 Steps were already in Bill's mind and *had been there since his Spiritual Experience in December 1934* in Towns Hospital in New York City!

Step # 1	
Step # 2	P13 L6
Step # 3	P13 L7
Step # 4	P13 L9
Step # 5	P13 L10
Steps #6&7	P13 L11
Step # 8	P13 L15
Step # 9	P13 L17
Step #10	P13 L21
Step #11	
Step # 12	P13 L22

So the essence of the Recovery Program was in the mind of Bill W. from the time he had his "Experience" in the hospital'. He finally put it in writing in December 1938, four years later!

The elements for sobriety have always been here. Bill W. raised our consciousness about recovery such that it is worldwide and millions of lives have been given back to their owners.

## **BEGINNINGS AND ALCOHOLISM DEFINED**

1. When was A.A. “born”?
2. Who are the co-founders of A.A.?
3. What is the main purpose of the Big Book?
4. When was it published?
5. Who wrote the “Doctors Opinion”?
6. What is the definition of alcoholism? Pxxvi L4
7. Why do alcoholics drink? Pxxvi L30
8. What do you think is an “entire psychic change”?
9. What 5 classes of alcoholics does the book mention?
10. What is the common denominator of all alcoholic drinkers?

Step 1: *“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable.”*

We now have enough information to understand that we are truly “powerless” over alcohol. If you agree with that statement, you have “taken” Step One.



**BIG BOOK 101**

**OVERHEADS**